THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) The Central Board of Trustees of EPF (CBT) has recommended an interim rate of 8.5% for the year 2004-05. The rate of interest on Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) accumulations is determined by Government on the basis of the recommendations of CBT. CBT has not recommended a final rate of interest for 2004-05 to the Government. Orders determining the rate of interest on EPF accumulations have not been issued.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration.

Action against striking Bank Employees

3490. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the strikes by the staff and officers of Nationalised Banks in the country during the last one year as a result of which public had to face great difficulties;

(b) the reasons for strikes by the staff and officers concerned banks;

(c) whether Government have taken any action against such bank employees; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The bank officers and staff had gone on strike four times during the last one year.

(b) The reasons for the strike by the staff and officers included, opposition of Supreme Court verdict on right to strike, the so called anti-labour policies of the Government, the privatization move, early settlement of the wage revision, second option on pension, merger and acquisition of Public Sector Banks and Foreign Banks/Institutions/Investors taking over Indian Banks.

(c) and (d) In terms of the extant instructions, the principle of "No Work No Pay" is to be followed by the bank management for striking employees.

Facilities to Panchayats

†3491. SHRI JANESHWAR MIHSRA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government is considering to provide facilities for enforcing the Panchayati Raj Act;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government are providing funds to some metropolitan cities of Uttar Pradesh;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government would provide funds for betterment of gram panchayats and metropolitan corporations of Uttar Pradesh; and

(e) if so, in what manner and by when?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The Constitution enjoins the State Governments to endow Panchayats with powers and authority through appropriate legislation so as to enable them to function as institutions of self-government. In pursuance thereof, States have passed legislation devolving functions to the three levels of Panchayats. However, devolution of functions through State legislation will require to be amplified through specific assignment of activities relating to these functions, as also devolution of funds and functionaries. Between July and December, 2004, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened Seven Round Table Meetings with the State Ministers-in-charge of Panchayati Raj and evolved by consensus 150 points for action relating to 18 dimensions of Panchayati Raj, which have been put together in a compendium that was adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur. To monitor the implementation of these consensual conclusions, the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj will be visiting all States and Union Territories. A Committee of Secretaries have been constituted to meet approximately once a month and a Council of Panchayati Raj Ministers will be reviewing implementation periodically. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj also provides funds for the training of elected representatives in Panchayats.

(b) The Ministry of Urban Development have informed us that there is no scheme under operation of that Ministry under which funds are provided to the Metropolitan cities of Uttar Pradesh.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) The Central Finance Commission makes recommendations on the measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of the States to supplement the resources of the Panchayats on the basis of the recommendations of the State Finance Commission. With respect to Uttar Pradesh, the Twelfth Finance Commission recommended an amount of Rs. 2928.00 crore and Rs. 517.00 crore respectively for Panchayats and

and Municipalities in U.P. for 2005-2010. The Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure, Finance Commission Division have informed us that Guidelines are being framed by them incorporating recommendations of Twelfth Finance Commission. The funds will be released to the State Government in two half yearly installments in terms of these guidelines.

Development of Community Centres through Panchayats

3492. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to encourage community development through Panchayats in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have drawn any plans or schemes for the development of community centres which can provide drinking water, healthcare services and free education to poor section of the society; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution lists out 29 matters that may be devolved upon Panchayats by States, all of which have a bearing on holistic community development.

(b) Details of the functions devolved upon Panchayats by States are given in the Statement. (*See* below)

(c) and (d) The Central Finance Commission makes recommendations on the measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of the States to supplement the resources of the Panchayats on the basis of the recommendations of the State Finance Commission. The Twelfth Finance Commission, which has recently submitted its report to the Government, has recommended that from 2005-2010, the Consolidated Funds of States may be augmented by Rs. 20,000 crore so as to supplement the resources of Panchayats so that they are encouraged to take over assets relating to water supply and sanitation and utilize the grants for repairs, rejuvenation and O&M of these assets.

The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, a scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development, which is being implemented by Panchayats at the